

Message Text

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TAGS: AORG, EAID, FAO

SUBJECT: RECONSTITUTION OF IGC/WFP AS COMMITTEE ON FOOD

AID POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

REF: ROME 2884

1. SUMMARY. USG DOES NOT YET HAVE FIRM POSITION ON SHAPE OF RECONSTITUTED IGC. HOWEVER WE LEANING TOWARD SINGLE BODY AND LIMITED, IF ANY, INCREASE IN PRESENT SIZE. WE PLACE HIGH PRIORITY ON MAINTAINING PRESENT BALANCE BETWEEN DONORS AND RECIPIENTS. WE SEE IGC ROLE AS CONCENTRATING ON OPERATIONAL COORDINATION AND POLICY GUIDANCE WITH RESPECT TO EMERGENCY AND PROJECT TYPE ASSISTANCE. END SUMMARY.

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2. OUR PRESENT THINKING ABOUT RECONSTITUTED IGC FAVORS

SINGLE BODY TO HANDLE BOTH NEW POLICY RESPONSIBILITIES AND PRESENT OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS. WITH REGARD TO SIZE, OUR FIRST PREFERENCE WOULD BE TO RETAIN THE PRESENT 24 MEMBERS. HOWEVER SOME ENLARGEMENT MAY BE REQUIRED AS VISIBLE RESPONSE TO NEW DUTIES TO BE ESTABLISHED UNDER WFC RECOMMENDATIONS. ENLARGEMENT WOULD ALSO GIVE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOME AREAS (LA) TO STRENGTHEN REPRESENTATION. WE OPPOSE LARGE INCREASE IN SIZE OF

GOVERNING BODY, WHETHER OPEN-ENDED OR NOT, AND RELATED ESTABLISHMENT OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO HANDLE OPERATIONS ALONG LINES OF PRESENT IGC. LARGE INCREASE WOULD INEVITABLY UPSET PRESENT UNIQUE BALANCE BETWEEN DONORS AND RECIPIENTS, IN OUR VIEW, WHICH HAS CONTRIBUTED TO IGC'S EFFECTIVENESS. THIS WOULD BE LIKELY EVEN IF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (PERHAPS PRESENT IGC) CONTINUES TO EXERCISE OPERATIONAL CONTROL. IN PRACTICE WE DOUBT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE COULD BE INSULATED FROM EFFORTS OF LARGER PARENT BODY TO CONTROL POLICY.

3. AS POINTED OUT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AQUINO IN VISIT HERE JUST CONCLUDED, ANY IGC ENLARGEMENT NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED IN BLOCKS OF 6 TO ALLOW FOR ANNUAL ELECTION OF EQUAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS BY FAO COUNCIL AND ECOSOC FOR 3-YEAR PERIOD. THEREFORE, RECONSTITUTION OF IGC INTO POLICY COMMITTEE OF 30 MEMBERS WOULD APPEAR IN ORDER. INCREASED RESPONSIBILITIES COULD BE MET, GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION IMPROVED, DONOR/RECIPIENT BALANCE MAINTAINED, AND PRESENT OPERATIONS CONTINUED WITH REASONABLE EFFICIENCY. WE VIEW BALANCED SINGLE BODY AS DISTINCTLY BETTER SOLUTION TO PROBLEM OF HANDLING BOTH OPERATIONAL AND POLICY RESPONSIBILITIES THAN SEPARATE, IMBALANCED BODY SUPERVISING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. OUR THINKING IS OPEN ON WHETHER IGC WOULD NEED SEPARATE SESSIONS FOR POLICY AND OPERATIONAL MATTERS OR WHETHER THIS CAN BE HANDLED THROUGH APPROPRIATE SCHEDULING IN AGENDA.

4. FYI. AQUINO REPORTED TO US INDICATIONS THAT CANADA AND PAKISTAN, AS WELL AS OTHER DONOR COUNTRIES, MAY SUPPORT 30, WHILE PUSH FOR OPEN END OR MAJOR ENLARGEMENT MAY COME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FROM AFRICANS LED BY SENEGAL. WE WOULD STRONGLY OPPOSE POLICY COMMITTEE OF MORE THAN 30 MEMBERS. WE SEE SOME TACTICAL MERITS IN FIRST FOCUSING ON COMMITTEE OF PRESENT SIZE BUT BEING WILLING FALL BACK TO 30 AS APPROPRIATE COMPROMISE. AQUINO WOULD SUPPORT THIS. END FYI.

5. IN OUR VIEW, THE RECONSTITUTED IGC WOULD PROVIDE FORUM FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONSULTATIONS ON FOOD AID

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, CONCENTRATING ON : (A) OPERATIONAL COORDINATION OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL EMERGENCY AND PROJECT-TYPE ASSISTANCE, (B) INFORMATION EXCHANGE TO AVOID DUPLICATION OF EFFORT, PROGRAM DEFICIENCIES AND FAULTY ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT NEEDS, (C) REVIEWS OF TRENDS IN FOOD AID REQUIREMENTS AND FLOWS. AS RECOMMENDED IN WFC RESOLUTION, IGC SHOULD REPORT ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO WORLD FOOD COUNCIL. WHILE RECOGNIZING THESE ADVISORY AND OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS IN GENERAL TERMS, USG WOULD HAVE SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT ANY FINDINGS WHICH MIGHT

PROPOSE ALLOCATION, QUOTAS OR LIMITATIONS OF BILATERAL FOOD AID.

6. PRESENT USG THINKING IS THAT FOOD AID, OTHER THAN EMERGENCY AND PROJECT ASSISTANCE, IS MORE PROPERLY CONSIDERED AS FORM OF BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SUPPORT OR IN TERMS OF OVER-ALL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. AS SUCH, CO-ORDINATION OF TITLE I-TYPE ASSISTANCE (CONCESSIONAL SALES), INTEGRATION WITH OTHER ASSISTANCE FLOWS, AND NEGOTIATION OF NEW UNDERTAKING ON FOOD AID COMMITMENTS ARE BEST HANDLED IN FORA OTHER THAN IGC/WFP. USG PROPOSED AT WFC ESTABLISHMENT OF FOOD AID SUBCOMMITTEE TO CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON FOOD PRODUCTION AND INVESTMENT. WE MAY RENEW THIS PROPOSAL WHEN CGFPI IS FORMED. IN ANY CASE, WE DO NOT SEE RECONSTITUTED IGC PERFORMING THESE FUNCTIONS.

7. DEPARTMENT WELCOMES OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO COMMUNICATE ABOVE VIEWS ON RECONSTITUTION TO ED AND PERMREPS AT MARCH 7 MEETING AND WOULD APPRECIATE REPORT OF THEIR REACTIONS.

8. FYI. DRAFT RESOLUTION ON RECONSTITUTION NOT YET LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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